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**METHOD, APPARATUS, AND PROGRAM FOR ASSOCIATING SUCCESSIVE
REPOINTING OF A BROWSER'S LOAD FUNCTION WITH NAVIGATIONAL
LINKS IN WEB PAGES**

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Technical Field:

The present invention relates to an improved data processing system and, in particular, to a method and apparatus for managing world wide web documents in a data processing system. Still more particularly, the present invention provides a method, apparatus, and program for associating a control with series links in a web browser.

15 **2. Description of Related Art:**

The worldwide network of computers commonly known as the "Internet" has seen explosive growth in the last several years. Mainly, this growth has been fueled by the introduction and widespread use of so-called "web browsers," which enable simple graphical user interface-based access to network servers, which support documents formatted as so-called "web pages." These web pages are versatile and customized by authors. For example, web pages may mix text and graphic images. A web page also may include fonts of varying sizes.

A browser is a program that is executed on a graphical user interface (GUI). The browser allows a user to seamlessly load documents from the Internet and display them by means of the GUI. These documents are commonly formatted using markup language protocols, such as hypertext markup language (HTML). Portions of text and images within a document are delimited by indicators,

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which affect the format for display. In HTML documents, the indicators are referred to as tags. Tags may include links, also referred to as "hyperlinks," to other pages. The browser gives some means of viewing the contents of 5 web pages (or nodes) and of navigating from one web page to another in response to selection of the links.

The versatility and customization of web pages, however, are sometimes an impediment to users. Web documents may be designed to span multiple pages. Thus, 10 navigating these documents requires the user to select links for the next page or previous page. The location of these links is dependent on the layout of the page, rather than the interface of the browser. Often, the cursor is not reliably positioned opportunely over the 15 same link in successive pages. Having to repeatedly scroll a web page and reposition the cursor results in wasted time and repetitive stress syndrome activity. Furthermore, users that have difficulty with fine motor movements may experience frustration with successive 20 pages in which the link to the next pages requires unnecessary scrolling and repositioning of the cursor.

Web browsers include toolbar buttons, keyboard shortcuts, and right-click menu items for navigation between a current document and a next or previous 25 document in the document history. However, this often does not correspond to the succession of pages in a multiple page document. For example, a user may bookmark a page in the middle of the succession. When a user selects that bookmark, the document history does not 30 accurately reflect the succession of pages.

Thus, it would be advantageous to provide a mechanism for associating successive repointing of a

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browser's load function with navigational links in web pages.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a mechanism for
5 associating a locational affinity between a series link
and a cursor or other control to allow consistent paging
through a series of pages without having to scroll the
page and physically relocate the cursor over the link. A
web browser scans for key phrases or words in links, such
10 as "next," "previous," "more," and "back." The browser
may scan the link text, uniform resource locators,
graphic filenames, and alt text associated with graphics.
When a series link is identified, such as a link to a
"next" or "previous" page, the browser may automatically
15 scroll the page and reposition the mouse cursor over the
link. The browser may also provide other series link
controls, such as a right-click menu that provides menu
items associated with next page and previous page links.
Furthermore, the browser may provide buttons in a toolbar
20 for navigation between next page and previous page links.
Preferences may be defined by the user for customizing
the key words and interface options in order to identify
series links.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The novel features believed characteristic of the
5 invention are set forth in the appended claims. The
invention itself, however, as well as a preferred mode of
use, further objectives and advantages thereof, will best
be understood by reference to the following detailed
description of an illustrative embodiment when read in
10 conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 depicts a pictorial representation of a
network of data processing systems in which the present
invention may be implemented;

15 **Figure 2** is a block diagram of a data processing
system that may be implemented as a server in accordance
with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 3 is a block diagram illustrating a data
processing system in which the present invention may be
implemented;

20 **Figures 4A and 4B** are examples of screens of display
of a browser window in accordance with a preferred
embodiment of the present invention;

25 **Figure 5** is an example screen of display of a
browser window with a menu interface and toolbar
interface for selection of next and previous page links
in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present
invention;

30 **Figure 6** is an example of a screen of display of a
preferences customization window in accordance with a
preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 7 is a block diagram of a browser program in

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accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention; and

Figure 8 is a flowchart illustrating the operation of a web browser in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

With reference now to the figures, **Figure 1** depicts a
5 pictorial representation of a network of data processing
systems in which the present invention may be implemented.
Network data processing system **100** is a network of
computers in which the present invention may be
implemented. Network data processing system **100** contains
10 a network **102**, which is the medium used to provide
communications links between various devices and computers
connected together within network data processing system
100. Network **102** may include connections, such as wire,
wireless communication links, or fiber optic cables.

15 In the depicted example, a server **104** is connected to
network **102** along with storage unit **106**. In addition,
clients **108**, **110**, and **112** also are connected to network
102. These clients **108**, **110**, and **112** may be, for example,
personal computers or network computers. In the depicted
20 example, server **104** provides data, such as boot files,
operating system images, and applications to clients
108-112. Clients **108**, **110**, and **112** are clients to server
104. Network data processing system **100** may include
additional servers, clients, and other devices not shown.

25 In the depicted example, network data processing system
100 is the Internet with network **102** representing a
worldwide collection of networks and gateways that use the
TCP/IP suite of protocols to communicate with one another.
At the heart of the Internet is a backbone of high-speed
30 data communication lines between major nodes or host
computers, consisting of thousands of commercial,
government, educational and other computer systems that

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route data and messages. Of course, network data processing system **100** also may be implemented as a number of different types of networks, such as for example, an intranet, a local area network (LAN), or a wide area network (WAN). **Figure 1** is intended as an example, and not as an architectural limitation for the present invention.

Referring to **Figure 2**, a block diagram of a data processing system that may be implemented as a server, such as server **104** in **Figure 1**, is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

Data processing system **200** may be a symmetric multiprocessor (SMP) system including a plurality of processors **202** and **204** connected to system bus **206**.

Alternatively, a single processor system may be employed.

Also connected to system bus **206** is memory controller/cache **208**, which provides an interface to local memory **209**. I/O bus bridge **210** is connected to system bus **206** and provides an interface to I/O bus **212**. Memory controller/cache **208** and I/O bus bridge **210** may be integrated as depicted.

Peripheral component interconnect (PCI) bus bridge **214** connected to I/O bus **212** provides an interface to PCI local bus **216**. A number of modems may be connected to PCI bus **216**. Typical PCI bus implementations will support four PCI expansion slots or add-in connectors.

Communications links to network computers **108-112** in **Figure 1** may be provided through modem **218** and network adapter **220** connected to PCI local bus **216** through add-in boards.

Additional PCI bus bridges **222** and **224** provide interfaces for additional PCI buses **226** and **228**, from

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which additional modems or network adapters may be supported. In this manner, data processing system 200 allows connections to multiple network computers. A memory-mapped graphics adapter 230 and hard disk 232 may 5 also be connected to I/O bus 212 as depicted, either directly or indirectly.

Those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the hardware depicted in **Figure 2** may vary. For example, other peripheral devices, such as optical disk 10 drives and the like, also may be used in addition to or in place of the hardware depicted. The depicted example is not meant to imply architectural limitations with respect to the present invention.

The data processing system depicted in **Figure 2** may 15 be, for example, an IBM RISC/System 6000 system, a product of International Business Machines Corporation in Armonk, New York, running the Advanced Interactive Executive (AIX) operating system.

With reference now to **Figure 3**, a block diagram 20 illustrating a data processing system is depicted in which the present invention may be implemented. Data processing system 300 is an example of a client computer. Data processing system 300 employs a peripheral component interconnect (PCI) local bus architecture. Although the 25 depicted example employs a PCI bus, other bus architectures such as Accelerated Graphics Port (AGP) and Industry Standard Architecture (ISA) may be used. Processor 302 and main memory 304 are connected to PCI local bus 306 through PCI bridge 308. PCI bridge 308 also 30 may include an integrated memory controller and cache memory for processor 302. Additional connections to PCI

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local bus **306** may be made through direct component interconnection or through add-in boards. In the depicted example, local area network (LAN) adapter **310**, SCSI host bus adapter **312**, and expansion bus interface **314** are

5 connected to PCI local bus **306** by direct component connection. In contrast, audio adapter **316**, graphics adapter **318**, and audio/video adapter **319** are connected to PCI local bus **306** by add-in boards inserted into expansion slots. Expansion bus interface **314** provides a connection
10 for a keyboard and mouse adapter **320**, modem **322**, and additional memory **324**. Small computer system interface (SCSI) host bus adapter **312** provides a connection for hard disk drive **326**, tape drive **328**, and CD-ROM drive **330**.
15 Typical PCI local bus implementations will support three or four PCI expansion slots or add-in connectors.

Those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the hardware in **Figure 3** may vary depending on the implementation. Other internal hardware or peripheral devices, such as flash ROM (or equivalent nonvolatile memory) or optical disk drives and the like, may be used in addition to or in place of the hardware depicted in **Figure 3**. Also, the processes of the present invention may be applied to a multiprocessor data processing system.

20 As another example, data processing system **300** may be a stand-alone system configured to be bootable without relying on some type of network communication interface, whether or not data processing system **300** comprises some type of network communication interface. As a further
25 example, data processing system **300** may be a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) device, which is configured with

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ROM and/or flash ROM in order to provide non-volatile memory for storing operating system files and/or user-generated data.

The depicted example in **Figure 3** and above-described examples are not meant to imply architectural limitations. For example, data processing system **300** also may be a notebook computer or hand held computer in addition to taking the form of a PDA. Data processing system **300** also may be a kiosk or a Web appliance.

An operating system runs on processor **302** and is used to coordinate and provide control of various components within data processing system **300** in **Figure 3**. The operating system may be a commercially available operating system, such as Windows 2000, which is available from Microsoft Corporation. An object oriented programming system such as Java may run in conjunction with the operating system and provide calls to the operating system from Java programs or applications executing on data processing system **300**. "Java" is a trademark of Sun Microsystems, Inc. Instructions for the operating system, the object-oriented operating system, and applications or programs are located on storage devices, such as hard disk drive **326**, and may be loaded into main memory **304** for execution by processor **302**.

In particular, data processing system **300** may execute a web browser application program. A web browser is a program that is executed on a graphical user interface (GUI). The browser allows a user to seamlessly load documents from the Internet and display them by means of the GUI. These documents are commonly formatted using markup language protocols, such as hypertext markup

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language (HTML). Portions of text and images within a document are delimited by indicators, which affect the format for display. In HTML documents, the indicators are referred to as tags. Tags may include links, also referred to as "hyperlinks," to other pages. The browser gives some means of viewing the contents of web pages (or nodes) and of navigating from one web page to another in response to selection of the links.

In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention a mechanism associates a locational affinity between a series link and a cursor to allow consistent paging through a series of pages without having to physically relocate the cursor over the link. Examples of screens of display of a browser window are shown in **Figures 4A** and **4B** in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. Particularly with reference to **Figure 4A**, the screen comprises window **400**, including a title bar **402**, which may display the name of the application program. Title bar **402** also includes a control box **404**, which produces a drop-down menu (not shown) when selected with the mouse, and "minimize" **406**, "maximize" or "restore" **408**, and "close" **410** buttons. The "minimize" and "maximize" or "restore" buttons **406** and **408** determine the manner in which the program window is displayed. In this example, the "close" button **410** produces an "exit" command when selected. The drop-down menu produced by selecting control box **404** includes commands corresponding to "minimize," "maximize" or "restore," and "close" buttons, as well as "move" and "resize" commands.

Browser window **400** also includes a menu bar **412**.

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Menus to be selected from menu bar **412** may include "File," "Edit," "View," "Insert," "Format," "Tools," "Window," and "Help." However, menu bar **412** may include fewer or more menus, as understood by a person of

5 ordinary skill in the art. The browser window also includes toolbar **414** with buttons used to navigate web pages. The buttons may include, but are not limited to, "Back," "Forward," "Stop," "Refresh," "Home," and "Print."

10 The browser window includes a display area **416** in which the contents of a document are displayed. The document may be retrieved from a server, such as server **104** in **Figure 1**. The document may also be retrieved from another location, such as a hard disk in the client 15 computer. As seen in **Figure 4A**, a web page may include link **418** to the next page in a series of pages.

Turning now to **Figure 4B**, browser window **450** includes a display area in which the contents of a document are displayed. As seen in **Figure 4B**, a web page 20 may include link **452** to the previous page in a series of pages and link **454** to the next page in the series of pages.

In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the web browser scans for key phrases 25 or words in links, such as "next," "previous," "more," and "back." The browser may scan the link text, uniform resource locators, graphic filenames, and alt text associated with graphics. When a "next" or "previous" page link is identified, the browser may automatically 30 reposition the mouse cursor over the link. The browser may also automatically assign keyboard shortcuts to next

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and previous links.

With reference to **Figure 5**, an example screen of display of a browser window with a menu interface and toolbar interface for selection of next and previous page links is shown in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. Browser window **500** includes a display area in which the contents of a document are displayed. The web page may include a link to the previous page in a series of pages and a link to the next page in the series of pages. The browser provides right-click menu **502** that provides menu items associated with next page and previous page links. Furthermore, the browser window provides next page button **504** and previous page button **506** in the toolbar for navigation between the next page and previous page links.

Preferences may be defined by the user for customizing the key words and interface options. An example of a screen of display of a preferences customization window is shown in **Figure 6** in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. The screen comprises window **600** including a display area for presenting fields for customizing preferences.

Link text may provide indicators as to whether the link refers to a next page or a previous page. For example, the link text may be "next page". In field **602**, the user may provide a list of phrases, words, or truncated words for which to search in the link text of a document. A similar indication may be found in the uniform resource locator (URL) of a link. Field **604** allows the user to provide a list of phrases, words, or truncated words for which to search in the URLs of links

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in the document.

Links may be represented by graphics within a document. The graphic filenames may provide clues as to whether a link refers to a next page or previous page in a series of pages. For example, a graphic may have a filename "rightarrow.gif". A right arrow graphic may typically be used to refer to a next page in a series of pages, while a left arrow may refer to a previous page.

5 In field **606**, the user may provide a list of phrases, words, or truncated words for which to search in the graphic filenames of links within the document. Graphics also may have associated "alt text" which is displayed if the graphic cannot be retrieved. For example, the right arrow graphic may have alt text set to "right arrow."

10 15 Field **608** allows the user to provide a list of phrases, words, or truncated words for which to search in the alt text of graphical links in the document.

URLs may also provide other clues as to whether a link refers to a next page or a previous page within a series of pages. For example, the URL of a current page may be "http://domain/page01.html" and the URL of a link may be "http://domain/page02.html". Checkbox **610** allows the user to instruct the browser to search for ascending numbers in URLs in links and checkbox **612** allows the user to instruct the browser to search for descending numbers in URLs in links. Alternatively, the browser may also search for an alphabetic sequence. For example, the URL of a current page may be "http://domain/pageA.html" and the URL of a link may be "http://domain/pageB.html."

20 25 30 In fields **614** and **616**, the user may enter keyboard shortcuts for the next and previous links. Checkbox **618**

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allows the user to instruct the browser to add next and previous page links to the right-click menu and checkbox **620** allows the user to instruct the browser to add next and previous page links to the toolbar.

5 The preferences shown in **Figure 6** may result in more than one link that may be a next page link or a previous page link. The present invention may set priorities to the fields to resolve the discovery of multiple links. For example, the invention may give more weight to the
10 link text than the graphic filename, because the same graphic may be used for more than one link.

Turning next to **Figure 7**, a block diagram of a browser program is depicted in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention. A browser
15 is an application used to navigate or view information or data in a distributed database, such as the Internet or the World Wide Web.

In this example, browser **700** includes a user interface **702**, which is a graphical user interface (GUI) that allows the user to interface or communicate with browser **700**. User interface **702** includes link discovery module **750**, which discovers links to a next page and a previous page if the document is part of a series of pages. This interface provides for selection of various
25 functions through menus **704** and allows for navigation through navigation **706**. For example, menus **704** may allow a user to perform various functions, such as saving a file, opening a new window, displaying a history, and entering a URL. Menus **704** may also add next page and
30 previous page links to the right-click menu and other navigational menus. Navigation **706** allows for a user to

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5 navigate various pages and to select web sites for viewing. For example, navigation **706** may allow a user to see a previous page or a subsequent page relative to the present page. Preferences, such as those illustrated in **Figure 6**, may be set through preferences **708**.

Communications **710** is the mechanism with which browser **700** receives documents and other resources from a network such as the Internet. Further, communications **710** is used to send or upload documents and resources

10 onto a network. In the depicted example, communication **710** uses HTTP. Other protocols may be used depending on the implementation. Documents that are received by browser **700** are processed by language interpretation **712**, which includes an HTML unit **714** and a JavaScript unit **716**. Language interpretation **712** will process a document for presentation on graphical display **718**. In particular, HTML statements are processed by HTML unit **714** for presentation while JavaScript statements are processed by JavaScript unit **716**.

20 Graphical display **718** includes layout unit **720**, rendering unit **722**, and window management **724**. These units are involved in presenting web pages to a user based on results from language interpretation **712**.

25 Browser **700** is presented as an example of a browser program in which the present invention may be embodied. Browser **700** is not meant to imply architectural limitations to the present invention. Presently available browsers may include additional functions not shown or may omit functions shown in browser **700**. A browser may 30 be any application that is used to search for and display content on a distributed data processing system. Browser

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700 make be implemented using known browser applications, such Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer.

Netscape Navigator is available from Netscape Communications Corporation while Microsoft Internet

5 Explorer is available from Microsoft Corporation.

With reference to **Figure 8**, a flowchart is shown illustrating the operation of a web browser in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

The process begins, retrieves a document (step **802**), and

10 scans the link text, URLs, graphic filenames, and alt text for "next" and "previous" page links (step **804**).

Next, the process associates a series link control with identified series links (step **806**). A determination is then made as to whether an exit condition exists (step

15 **808**). An exit condition may exist when a user closes the browser window or exits through a menu command. If an exit condition exists, the process ends.

If an exit condition does not exist in step **808**, a determination is made as to whether a series link control

20 is activated (step **810**). If a series link control is activated, the process returns to step **802** to retrieve the document. If a series link control is not activated, a determination is made as to whether a new link is selected (step **812**), such as back, forward, or selection 25 of a link in the document. If a new link is selected, the process returns to step **802** to retrieve the document.

If a new link is not selected in step **812**, a determination is made as to whether any other action is selected (step **814**). If an action is selected, the

30 process performs the other action (step **816**) and returns to step **808** to determine whether an exit condition

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exists. If an action is not selected in step **814**, the process returns to step **808** to determine whether an exit condition exists.

Thus, the present invention solves the disadvantages of the prior art by providing a mechanism for associating a locational affinity between a series link and a cursor or tabbed focus field or other control to allow consistent paging through a series of pages without having to physically scroll the page and relocate the cursor over the link. A web browser scans for key phrases or words in links, such as "next," "previous," "more," and "back." The browser may scan the link text, uniform resource locators, graphic filenames, and alt text associated with graphics. However, the present invention is not limited to these examples. Future markup languages may provide other tags and the like to examine.

When a series link is identified, such as a "next" or "previous" page link, the browser may automatically scroll the page and reposition the mouse cursor over the link. The browser may also provide a right-click menu that provides menu items associated with next page and previous page links. Furthermore, the browser may provide buttons in a toolbar for navigation between next page and previous page links. Preferences may be defined by the user for customizing the key words and interface options in order to identify series links. Thus, the present invention enhances accessibility for users with difficulty with small motor movements and in moving a mouse.

It is important to note that while the present invention has been described in the context of a fully

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functioning data processing system, those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the processes of the present invention are capable of being distributed in the form of a computer readable medium of instructions and a variety of forms and that the present invention applies equally regardless of the particular type of signal bearing media actually used to carry out the distribution. Examples of computer readable media include recordable-type media, such as a floppy disk, a hard disk drive, a RAM, CD-ROMs, DVD-ROMs, and transmission-type media, such as digital and analog communications links, wired or wireless communications links using transmission forms, such as, for example, radio frequency and light wave transmissions. The computer readable media may take the form of coded formats that are decoded for actual use in a particular data processing system.

The description of the present invention has been presented for purposes of illustration and description, and is not intended to be exhaustive or limited to the invention in the form disclosed. Many modifications and variations will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art. The embodiment was chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the invention, the practical application, and to enable others of ordinary skill in the art to understand the invention for various embodiments with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.